



House Select Committee on Homeland Security **Democrats**

JIM TURNER, Ranking Member

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 19, 2004

Contact: Moira Whelan

(202) 226-8827

DEMOCRATS: “LETS WORK TOGETHER TO PROTECT AMERICA”

The Select Committee on Homeland Security will be considering the first Department of Homeland Security Authorization Act at a markup scheduled to begin at **4:30 p.m., Monday, July 19, 2004 in Cannon 345** and last throughout the night. The bill was originally proposed as a single bill, but has since been divided into nine separate bills. These bills contain no provisions on aviation, rail, and port security, and only minor provisions relating to border security, critical infrastructure protection, and interoperable communication equipment for first responder. Democratic members of the Select Committee will offer a series of amendments to remedy the shortcomings in this bill.

Democrats Closing the Security Gaps

Democrats believe that we can make America safer by taking strong, prompt steps to close the “security gaps” that continue to make the United States vulnerable to terrorist attack. We will offer legislation to do the following:

Prevent terrorist attacks through better intelligence sharing.

Democrats call on the President to develop a plan to improve current efforts to “connect the dots” among federal intelligence agencies and to create an information sharing architecture that links federal agencies, state and local law enforcement, and key private sector entities.

Protect chemical plants.

Democrats will require plants with highly toxic chemicals on site to conduct vulnerability assessments and develop security plans. The Department of Homeland Security would have power to require improvements in security.

Secure our ports.

Democrats will require the development of seals to secure and make tamper proof cargo containers entering the United States; improve the security practices of shippers that send goods from abroad to U.S. ports; and require prompt installation of technology to screen 100 percent of all cargo containers for nuclear and radiological materials.

Provide police, fire, and emergency rescue workers with interoperable communications systems.

Democrats propose a new federal grant program to provide all of our first responders with the radios and equipment that will allow them to communicate with each other during emergencies.

Improve rail and aviation security.

Democrats will propose common sense measures to improve security in our passenger rail and transit systems by providing security cameras and communications equipment, requiring emergency exercises, and securing key tunnels and bridges. To better secure our aviation systems, we will offer amendments to require air cargo to be screened, prohibit “bag-match” to be used as the only security measure for checked baggage, and require airport workers to go through the same security screening as passengers.

The Administration has announced that our nation is at the greatest risk of attack since September 11 – THE TIME FOR ACTION IS NOW.

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